



January 20, 2023 – Friday

Economy

2023 will be a year for Indian economy to strengthen its position on global stage, says RBI

This will be a year for the Indian economy to strengthen its position on the global stage while the rest of the world grapples with an impending recession, war and inflation, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in its report on the state of the economy. The distinction of being the most populated country with a sixth of the world's working population could only lift the prospects for the economy to surpass Germany and Japan by 2027, the central bank said, citing a forecast by the International Monetary Fund. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/2023-will-be-a-year-for-indian-economy-to-strengthen-its-position-on-global-stage-says-rbi/articleshow/97142351.cms>

Govt increases fee for facilitators to help start-ups apply for IP

The government has increased the fee payable to empanelled facilitators who help start-ups apply for patents, trademarks or designs. The facilitator shall not charge anything from the start-up or the entrepreneur, and this fee shall be paid directly to the facilitator by the Centre through the office of the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks (CGPDTM) and disbursed by the respective IP office, an official explained. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/govt-increases-fee-for-facilitators-to-help-start-ups-apply-for-ip/article66409628.ece>

Banking and Finance

India set to opt for a conservative divestment target for FY24

The Indian government is likely to set a conservative target for the funds it can raise through the disinvestment of state enterprises in fiscal 2024 after mop-up fell short this year, analysts said. "We pencil in divestment receipts of 350 billion Indian rupees (\$4.30 billion) in 2022/23... For 2023/24, we factor in divestments of 500 billion rupees," Kotak Institutional Equities said in a note. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/india-set-to-opt-for-a-conservative-divestment-target-for-fy24/articleshow/97117417.cms>

Proposed divestment of 8 fertiliser PSUs put on hold

The government has put off the proposed privatisation of eight state-run fertiliser companies as it looks to ramp up local production to reduce dependence on imports. A decision to this effect was taken at a meeting last month attended by officials from the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), Department of Economic Affairs and Department of Fertilisers, people aware of the developments told ET. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/chem/-/fertilisers/proposed-divestment-of-8-fertiliser-psus-put-on-hold/articleshow/97147208.cms>

Achieve financial inclusion targets, finance ministry tells PSBs

The finance ministry on Thursday exhorted public sector banks (PSBs) to achieve their financial inclusion targets allotted to them for 2022-23. In a full day review meeting of heads of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) and financial institutions chaired by Department of Financial Services (DFS) secretary Vivek Joshi, discussions also took place regarding the amendments proposed in Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) with regard to reducing the delays

in the processes relating to admission, resolution, National Company Law Tribunal's (NCLT) approval and liquidation. Officials from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) also participated in the meeting.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/finmin-exhorts-psbs-to-achieve-financial-inclusion-targets-for-fy23-123011901357_1.html

Internet connectivity key to India's robust financial inclusion: SBI chief

Robust mobile and internet connectivity has helped India in a big way to expand financial inclusion, while a diverse network of banking correspondents and micro ATMs has ensured last mile reach, SBI Chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara said on Thursday. Speaking at a session on 'Financial inclusion beyond access' during the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2023 here, he also said a lot is being done in the country to spread financial and digital literacy to help people with their banking needs and to safeguard them from any frauds. "We are a country of 1.3 billion and the mobile phone connections we have are about 1.2 billion. We also have some 800 million internet connections and that has helped us a lot expand financial inclusion," Khara said.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/internet-connectivity-key-to-india-s-robust-financial-inclusion-sbi-chief-123011900864_1.html

Industry

Registration of new companies picks up pace in December

Registration of new companies picked up pace in December 2022 to the second highest level this fiscal, indicating an uptick in business sentiment and sustained move towards formalisation. A total of 16,072 companies were registered with a collective paid-up capital of Rs 617.42 crore in December, according to data from the ministry of corporate affairs. "There was an overall increase of 25% in the number of new registrations in December 2022 when compared to November 2022," the monthly report noted.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/registration-of-new-companies-picks-up-pace-in-december/2954111/>

Retailers have big plans in store this year

Retailers in India leased nearly 4.7 million square feet of space across top cities in 2022, highest since 2019 to compensate for the slow expansion during the first two Covid-hit years. Experts said leasing in 2023 could outpace even the 2019-level when retailers cumulatively took up a record 6.8 million sq ft of new space. According to CBRE, Bangalore and Delhi-NCR had a major share (61%) in leasing activity in 2022, while Chennai, Hyderabad, and Pune had a 9% share each.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/retail/retailers-have-big-plans-in-store-this-year/articleshow/97148585.cms>

December retail sales jump 16% from pre-Covid levels, shows RAI survey

The Retailers Association of India (RAI) conducted the 35th edition of the Retail Business Survey, according to which the retail sales in December 2022 grew 16 per cent as against the sales recorded during December 2019 or the pre-pandemic period, reported Livemint. According to the findings of the survey, in December, retail businesses across regions indicated a jump in sales as compared to pre-pandemic levels with east India signaling a growth of 20 per cent, while retailers in south India and west India reporting a growth of 18 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively, followed by 10 per cent growth in North India. The report also mentions that across categories, footwear retailers reported a growth of 29 per cent compared to sales levels in December 2019; this was followed by jewellery (26 per cent) and sporting goods (25 per cent), as compared to sales levels in the pre-pandemic period. On the other hand, apparel retailers logged a nine per cent growth during the period, whereas, consumer durables retailers witnessed a growth of six per cent in sales. Food and grocery retailers reported a 14 per cent jump in business in December.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/december-retail-sales-jump-16-from-pre-covid-levels-shows-rai-survey-123011901081_1.html

E-scooter makers plan to power up portfolio with more affordable models

Established electric scooter makers, including Ather Energy, TVS Motor Co and Bajaj Auto, aim to ride in more affordable, low-cost variants of their existing models over the next 12 to 18 months, said people privy to the

plans. To make room for mass-market models, manufacturers are looking at a significant ramp up in their capacities over the next two years, they said.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/renewables/e-scooter-makers-plan-to-power-up-portfolio-with-more-affordable-models/articleshow/97148714.cms>

Agriculture

FCI to undertake open market sale for 2-3 MT wheat

The Food Corporation of India (FCI) is likely to start open market sale of wheat this month to curb abnormally high prices of the cereal. "The FCI will likely undertake open market sale of 2-3 million tonnes (MT) of wheat to bulk buyers such as flour millers by the end of January," said a senior official, who did not wish to be identified.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/fci-to-undertake-open-market-sale-for-2-3-mt-wheat/articleshow/97122936.cms>

Govt will soon take steps to control rise in wheat, atta prices: Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra

Retail prices of wheat and wheat flour (atta) have increased and the government will soon take measures to control the rising rates, Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said on Thursday. The government is monitoring the prices of wheat and atta regularly, he said, adding that "all options are being explored" to bring down the prices. "We are finding that there is an uptick in the prices of wheat and atta. We are aware of the issue. Various options are being explored by the government and very soon we will come up with our response," Chopra told reporters when asked about rising prices of atta that has touched Rs 38 per kg and the steps being taken by the food ministry to check prices.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/govt-will-soon-take-steps-to-control-rise-in-wheat-atta-prices-food-secretary-sanjeev-chopra/articleshow/97140924.cms>

Crissil sees revenue of India's cashew processing industry surging beyond Rs 30,000 cr next fiscal

Higher realisation and rising domestic demand will lift the revenue of the Indian cashew processing industry beyond Rs 30,000 crore next fiscal, the highest ever, driven by 15% on-year growth in revenue this fiscal and the next, said CRISIL Rating on Thursday. Operating margins will improve 200 basis points (bps) to an all-time high of 7% this fiscal and will remain at a similar level next fiscal, supported by an 8-10% increase in the spreads between raw cashew nut (RCN) and kernel prices. A study of 30 cashew processors rated by CRISIL Ratings, which account for 15% of the industry revenue, indicates as much.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/crisil-sees-revenue-of-indias-cashew-processing-industry-surging-beyond-rs-30000-cr-next-fiscal/articleshow/97122978.cms>

Infrastructure

PM gifts Rs 38,000-cr development projects to Mumbai; Eknath Shinde, Devendra Fadnavis target Uddhav govt

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday inaugurated and laid foundation stones of development projects worth more than Rs 38,000 crore in different sectors in Mumbai, giving a big push to infrastructure, urban travel and healthcare ahead of civic polls, where the BJP and the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena will seek to showcase these ventures to take on the political rivals. This was Modi's first visit to Mumbai after Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde took office in June-end last year after dislodging the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government. At the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony of development projects at Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), both Shinde and deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis targeted the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena faction and the MVA government. Civic elections in Mumbai and some other important cities, including Pune, Thane and Nagpur, are likely to be held later this year.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/pm-gifts-rs-38000-cr-development-projects-to-mumbai-eknath-shinde-devendra-fadnavis-target-uddhav-govt/articleshow/97139933.cms>

Railways earns Rs 191,162 cr revenue in FY23; Rs 41k cr more than last year

Ahead of the Union Budget, the Railways on Thursday said it has earned Rs 41,000 crore more in revenue so far in 2022-23 as compared to the same period in the previous fiscal. This year till date, the Railways earned Rs 1,91,162 crore compared to Rs 1,48,970 crore in the year-ago period, official data showed. According to the data, the Railways loaded 1,185 MT of goods so far this year. The Railways expects to end this fiscal with a total

revenue of Rs 2,35,000 crore, officials said. It also plans to introduce sleeper versions of the Vande Bharat Express by 2025 and is preparing to award contracts for additional 200 current versions of the train this month. The Railways is expected to concentrate on manufacturing around 478 Vande Bharat trains as well as trains driven by hydrogen, the officials added. Major investments are also likely to be made in other green fuels.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/railways-earns-rs-191-162-cr-revenue-in-fy23-rs-41k-cr-more-than-last-year-123011901507_1.html

Pace of national highway construction slows down to 20.99 km a day in current fiscal: Govt

The pace of national highway construction in the country has slowed to 20.99 kilometre a day during the first nine-month of the current financial year, according to official data. The pace of the construction of national highway (NH) in the country had touched a record high of 37 kilometre a day in 2020-21. However, the pace came down to 28.64 km a day in 2021-22 due to Covid-19 pandemic-related disruptions and a longer-than-usual monsoon in some parts of the country, the ministry said. "The ministry has constructed 5,774 kms of National Highways up to December in 2022-23 as compared to 5,835 km constructed up to December 2021-22," the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) said in its monthly summary for the Cabinet for December 2022.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/pace-of-nh-construction-slows-down-to-20-99-km-a-day-in-current-fiscal-govt/articleshow/97142757.cms>

Centre to allocate Rs 12,600 crore to Gujarat for construction of roads, bridges and logistic parks: Gadkari

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday announced that the central government will allocate an additional fund of Rs 12,600 crore to Gujarat for construction of roads, bridges and logistic parks in the state. This fund will include Rs 6,000 crore for development of multi-modal logistic parks in the state and Rs 1,000 crore to construction of Road Over Bridges (ROBs) or Road Under Bridges (RUBs) on roads other than national highways in the state, he said. The Minister for Road Transport and Highways was talking to reporters at Kavitha village near Ahmedabad after inspecting the ongoing works for the upcoming Ahmedabad-Dholera Expressway. He was in Gujarat to review the progress of various highway projects being implemented by the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) in the state. On Wednesday, Gadkari had held a high-level meeting with Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel in Gandhinagar about the ongoing highway projects in the state.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/centre-to-allocate-rs-12600-crore-to-gujarat-for-construction-of-roads-bridges-and-logistic-parks-gadkari/articleshow/97136367.cms>

Telecom

Implementation of caller name display should not be mandatory: Telcos' body

Industry body COAI has contended that implementation of Calling Name Presentation (CNAP) should not be made mandatory but kept optional for telecom operators, as the association shared technical, privacy and cost related concerns with regulator TRAI to argue its point. The submissions came as part of a consultation process initiated by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on the need to introduce the Calling Name Presentation (CNAP) supplementary service in the telecommunication networks. Put simply, CNAP is a supplementary service which enables the caller's name to flash on phone screens when someone calls. COAI, whose members include Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, said "CNAP should not be mandatory and should be optional for the telecom service providers".

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/implementation-of-caller-name-display-should-not-be-mandatory-telcos-body-123011901534_1.html

States

Centre approves 'Apple Cluster' for Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian district

The Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ministry on Thursday approved an "Apple Cluster" for Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian district under the Cluster Development Programme. This was announced during a daylong conference on 'India Cold Chain Conclave', organised by the Ministry in conjunction with the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry in New Delhi. During the conference, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Secretary, Manoj

Ahuja, formally announced the decision with regard to setting up of the apple cluster for the district under Cluster Development Programme and nod to the 'Acceptance Letter' to J&K for implementation.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/centre-approves-rs-135-cr-apple-cluster-for-j-k-s-shopian-123011901573_1.html

Odisha approves 9 investment projects worth Rs 1.53 lakh crore

The Odisha government on Thursday approved nine investment projects worth Rs 1.53 lakh crore including a Rs 38,000 crore proposal of ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel (AMNS) India Ltd, an official said. The high level clearance authority (HLCA) of Odisha led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has approved these projects that would generate employment for over 27,000 people in the state. The HLCA has given a go-ahead to four projects in the green energy and equipment sector, two projects in the paper industries, two projects in the metals and minerals sector and one project in the IT infrastructure sector. The project intents were received during the Make in Odisha

Conclave, 2022.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/steel/arcelormittal-nippon-venture-wins-approval-for-4-7-billion-indian-steel-plant/articleshow/97143728.cms?utm_source=ETTopNews&utm_medium=HPTN&utm_campaign=AL1&utm_content=23

External

UAE and India discussing settling non-oil trade in rupees

The United Arab Emirates is in early discussions with India to trade non-oil commodities in Indian rupees, Minister for Foreign Trade Dr Thani Al Zeyoudi told Reuters on Thursday. The minister said other countries, including China, had also raised the issue of settling non-oil trade payments in local currencies. He added that the UAE is hoping to conclude a trade agreement with Cambodia in the first quarter.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/davos-2023uae-and-india-discussing-settling-non-oil-trade-in-rupees/articleshow/97134160.cms>

Outward remittances under LRS scheme near \$2 billion in Nov: RBI

Indians remitted close to \$2 billion in November under the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) liberalised remittance scheme (LRS), latest data released by the central bank showed. Outward remittances under the scheme jumped 29 per cent to \$1.99 billion compared to \$1.54 billion in the year-ago month. Sequentially, outward remittances under the scheme were up about 3.5 per cent. International travel continued to remain over 50 per cent of the entire outward remittance by Indians under the scheme. In November, outward remittances for international travel touched \$1.03 billion, up 2.25 times from the year-ago period. In 2021, international travel was marred by Covid-related restrictions but slowly picked up later.

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/outward-remittance-under-lrs-scheme-touched-almost-2-bn-in-nov-rbi-123011901169_1.html

Govt to take call on increasing sugar export quota next month: Food Secy

The government will take a decision next month on increasing the sugar export quota from current 60 lakh tonnes after assessing the domestic production and internal demand, Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said on Thursday. The food ministry has allowed 60 lakh tonnes of sugar exports for the current 2022-23 marketing year (October-September). India exported around 110 lakh tonnes of sugar -- an all-time high -- in the previous year. In the current marketing year so far, the mills have dispatched 30 lakh tonnes of sugar for exports and out of that 18 lakh tonnes have already been shipped. The food ministry said the entire 60 lakh tonnes will get exported by May. Asked about increasing the exports quota, Chopra told reporters: "We are open to revisiting the export quota. Depending on the domestic production and internal requirement, we will take a fresh call in the next month or so."

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-to-take-call-on-increasing-sugar-export-quota-next-month-food-secy-123011901145_1.html

Jaishankar conveys India's commitment to increase investment flows to Sri Lanka to hasten economic recovery

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday met Sri Lanka's top leadership and conveyed India's commitment to increase investment flows to hasten the debt-ridden island nation's economic recovery. "Look

forward to my discussions with the leadership tomorrow morning," Jaishankar tweeted after he held talks with his Sri Lankan counterpart Ali Sabry soon after his arrival here, as India informed the IMF its assurance which the global lender wants from creditors for providing a much-needed bailout to the cash-strapped island nation. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/jaishankar-conveys-indias-commitment-to-increase-investment-flows-to-sri-lanka-to-hasten-economic-recovery/articleshow/97149179.cms>